

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



Administrative Issuance: CFSA-05-6

TO: All CFSA Staff

FROM: Uma Ahluwalia
Principal Deputy Director

DATE: Friday, August 5, 2005

RE: **Funeral Arrangements and Assistance with Burial or Cremation Expenses**

This Administrative Issuance offers guidance to CFSA staff, contract agency staff and resource parents regarding funeral arrangements and assistance with burial expenses in the event of the death of a child receiving services in their own home or in out-of-home placement. Contract agencies with case management responsibility are required to comply with provisions of this Administrative Issuance.

If you have any questions about this Administrative Issuance please contact the Principal Deputy Director or the Office of the Attorney General.

1. General Expectations of Social Workers

- a. Social workers are expected to work with the deceased's biological family and resource family (if applicable) to assist in making funeral arrangements. Social workers shall make attempts and give priority to honoring the family's preferences when possible.
- b. Social workers are expected to assess the need for grief counseling and offer the services, if appropriate and desired by the family and/or resource family (if applicable), through the Office of Clinical Practice.
- c. All information shall be documented in FACES and copies of relevant documents maintained in the hard copy case file.
- d. Social workers are expected to use their supervisor, Program Manager, and Program Administrator for emotional support during this process. Grief counseling and other supportive services shall be made available to the social worker when appropriate. Social workers may access services through the District Governments' Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or through their private insurance.

2. Children in Out-of-Home Placement

- a. CFSA may provide up to \$5000.00 to cover the requested funeral expenses of children with the legal status of committed, shelter care and/ or children that are in the agency's custody. Only funeral homes on the approved vendor list may be selected to provide burial services (see attachment). Any vendor not on the list will need the approval of the Principal Deputy.

- b. Financial assistance will cover costs associated with burial or cremation expenses. If there are unusual circumstances, the social worker should consult the Principal Deputy regarding special conditions requiring alternative funeral arrangements. When requesting funds the social worker must submit a memorandum that shall include the following:
 - i. Name of the child;
 - ii. CFSA case identification number;
 - iii. Legal status of the child;
 - iv. Date and time of funeral service;
 - v. Name and address of the funeral home providing funeral services;
 - vi. Provide an itemized list of all services;
 - vii. Identify the amount of the request; and
 - viii. Include as an attachment, a copy of the purchase order/invoice from the vendor.
- c. CFSA social workers must submit the memorandum to the Program Administrator for review and to the Principal Deputy Director for approval.
- d. The social worker shall forward the approved memorandum to fiscal operations for processing of the payment.
- e. Private agency social workers shall submit the memorandum to the Administrator for the Office of Licensing and Monitoring and to the Deputy Director for approval
- f. If parental rights have not been terminated, a parent must sign all official documents (i.e. death certificate, hospital release forms, etc.). If the parents are unable to be located the social worker shall contact the Assistant Attorney General.
- g. All of the deceased's personal effects shall be returned to the family. If parental rights have been terminated or the family cannot be located the Agency shall make a determination regarding disposal of all items.
- h. Social workers are expected to access resources available through the Office of Volunteer Services when clothing is needed before making a request for a clothing voucher.

3. **Resources for Families**

a. **Children Receiving Services in Their Own Home**

Families of children receiving services in their own home may use the financial assistance offered through the Department of Human Services Income Maintenance Administration (IMA) Burial Assistance Program. See attachment for additional information or contact the IMA Burial Unit at (202) 698-4112.

b. **Crime Victims Compensation Program**

If the death is caused by violent crime, families of the deceased may access financial assistance through the Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP). The CVCP pays for bills not covered by collateral sources (i.e. private health, life, or automobile insurance, medical aid programs, and Social Security income or disability). Coverage may not exceed \$25,000 per claim with a maximum of \$3,000 for funeral expenses. Additional information and/or applications may be obtained by calling the CVCP office at (202) 879-4216.